1: Orans E-5 (1957-1958) 1965
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181 is pre-eminently a social phenomenon: it obtains essentially
527 during festivals, which are community events; it derives from
[535] a festive atmosphere, which only the assembled community can create; and it reaches its community-centered peak as throngs of men and women form a large dancing circle, men and women alternating so that each one has a member of the opposite sex on each side, hands joined together. While I am sensible of anthropological naïveté, the remarks and demeanor of the Santal on such occasions leave little doubt that such performances are a potent source as well as a reflection of community solidarity. During and just after such dancing there is generally great camaraderie, and everyone exchanges cigarettes and rice beer while moving about from one house to another.

527 Although it is above all village solidarity which such festivals
• 628 enhance and reflect, they also draw together the members of a particular village and Santal from as far as thirty miles away. The Santal are aware of the attraction of the drums and in many regions festivals are celebrated at slightly different times by nearby villages so that one can participate in several, and
181 so that reciprocity becomes possible. "Pleasure," as the Santal
619 understand the term, is a shared understanding which creates
648 immediate bonds with co-tribals wherever they may be from, and, like many other more official boundary-marking symbols of solidarity, also binds the Santal to the neighboring Mundari tribes; it is not uncommon to find some members of several of these tribes participating in any particular Santal festival. To
[273] be sure it is also possible to see drunken men quarreling at a
[578] Santal festival, and other signs of discord, but this will be discussed later.

619 The Santal origin myth validates the kinship ties between all Santal and thereby provides a basis for such unity as the Santal

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621 occasions, bury or cremate one another, assist each other during illness or scarcity, entertain one another, and make "pleasure" possible. They may hunt together, jointly stock some pool with fish and generally carry on the daily routine of work and leisure side by side. Santal kinship groups are important within the village, but they are not nearly so divisive as Hindu castes. Neither the clan, the sub-clan, nor the local lineage is endogamous nor so structured as to limit social relations with nonmembers. Indeed, all are exogamous and it is only the entire tribe which in some respects is equivalent to a Hindu caste. The Santal village is therefore more internally solidary than a Hindu village of the region, though many clans may be represented.

Though not formally so, the village is in practice almost completely exogamous. This is partially due to the close relations between villagers and to the feeling that if a man's in-laws, and particularly his brothers-in-law, are living in his village, he will have difficulty in "disciplining" his wife; to put it as the Santals do, "She will run home to her house all the time making trouble between her husband and her brothers."

The tie to one's village is also supported by the attachment to the agricultural land which generally surrounds the few rows of houses and which is regarded as an integral part of the village. Besides the founding spirit of the village there are distinctive "boundary deities" (*sima boṅga*) marking the special attachment to one's own village.

622 As indicated earlier, the village is tied to about a dozen nearby villages in a quasi-judicial relationship. The head of this confederation is in many respects a multi-village headman. He is generally recruited from that local lineage which first migrated to the area; his tenure and appointment are subject to

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622 the approval of the villagers with whom he is associated; he
• 628 presides generally at disputes which cannot be settled within
692 a particular village, at inter-village disputes or at discussions of custom which are of concern to the entire set of villages under his jurisdiction; like the headman of a village, he is at most *primus inter pares*. Publicly he is little more than the voice of consensus, though privately his influence is that of an especially respected and powerful person.

69 The "justice" of the Santal, i.e., their institutionalized prac-
[577] tices as distinct from the desires of injured parties, places a strong premium on rendering decisions which will restore severed relationships and permit life to return to what it was
[681] before the dispute. The fee to the "court" is often as substantial as a judgment and must be paid by both parties. There is almost always encouragement to settle "out of court" by friends and officials. Fees paid to the "court" are generally spent to buy rice beer and viands so that after the bitterness of the contest both court and contestants join together in "pleasure," and all
[192] is as it was. These gatherings to settle disputes within the village are usually called "discussions" (*galmarao*); multi-village gatherings are known as *dorbar* (Hindi, *dorbar* = court).

584 Besides the judicial tie, each village is bound to a number of
621 others by marriage. Marriage procedures will be discussed at length but it is appropriate here to note that marriage is arranged with the aid of villagers and village officials as well as those associated by kinship and is of great interest and concern to the whole village. The ceremonies of marriage dramatize this concern, reflecting village solidarity in gaining and accepting a daughter or sorrowfully giving one up, as the case may be.

63 Beyond the multi-village judicial organization there are no
184 formally organized territorial units: however, regional cultural

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variation and specialization do exist even though there are few sharp boundary lines. There is one regular social event which reflects and intensifies regional cultural and social interconnection; this event is an annual hunt followed by a large all-male gathering outside some village where performances largely humorous and/or "obscene" (in their eyes as well as mine) take place. The participants consist of teams generally from several villages within a vicinity, and they compete with other similarly constituted teams for the favor of the assembled throng. Like many such gatherings, it terminates with rice beer.

In most of the territory occupied by the southern Santal, game is so scarce that the hunting aspect of this yearly event has become *pro forma.* After the hunt and its rituals, the various teams proceed in a march-dance parade through different villages as they make their way toward the final gathering place where performances will be held. Vigorous drum-beating marks the progress of their procession, and the characteristic Santal male strutting in dance is particularly pronounced. Any game that has been shot is borne aloft on pole stretchers. The entire event is known as *Sendra.*

Several of my informants as well as the literature maintain that serious discussions of Santal customs and even settling of disputes that have escaped solution within the judicial units occur after the hunt. This was not the case at the one *Sendra* I attended. However this may be, the *Sendra* remains the largest and territorially the widest gathering of Santal, sometimes bringing together more than a thousand Santal living within a radius of about fifty miles.

Still to be considered are the intertwined components of the extended and nuclear family. The term "extended family" is unfortunately one which has often been used very loosely; it

2; Skrefarud M-5 (1870-1871) 1942 AW42 Santal AW42

572 also become intimate friends, and also elderly women; but the time for becoming intimate friends is really when men and women are young.

Cattle-herd boys become great comrades, and mostly at this time intimate friendship between them is established. Those among the comrades whose hearts are especially bound together, become intimate friends; they stay together, they blow the flute, they kill birds, hares, and peafowls; they sing, they drive the cattle about by turns, and they help each other when there is any danger. They eat rice from the same leaf-plate, and when they kill birds or anything they divide and eat them. When they kill a hare, they give the killer the hind half. Persons who have become intimate friends in their boyhood, do not forget each other even when they have grown old, they remain friends all life long. When they, after having lost sight of each other, meet again long afterwards, they become very glad; they kiss each other.

Girls also become intimate friends in the same way, and it lasts all life long with them. Instead of the fellowship of the boys girls become what is called karam-branch friends. If the hearts of two girls have been bound fast together, they will at a karam festival* take two leaves of a branch and put these upon each other's head and thereupon salute all the people there. Afterwards they give the village people beer and food. These two do not address each other using their names, but address each other saying "karam branch". Young men and girls do not become intimate friends, except in connexion with marriage.

[178] Nowadays the intimacy of former days is being lost; the mind of the people is going to the bad. People mostly look out for their own happiness, let other people have whatever may happen.

m. Sticking together of the village people.

621 628 The Santals consider it an honour when their village is honoured, and they feel it a dishonour when their village is dishonoured; therefore if some one in their village gets into a quarrel with people of another village, then the whole village stands up for him. And if they hear any disgraceful statement concerning their own village, they apply to the headman of their village; thereupon they all, the village headman included, seize such people and say to them: Prove to us what you have spoken about us; otherwise we are not letting you off. If they are unable to substantiate it, they fine them very heavily. If any village has become famed, then the people of this village, when meeting with the people of the country in connexion with any matter, feel themselves high like hills; they take pride in the reputation of their village, even when they themselves are fools.

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[137] * The karam is a large forest tree, Adina cordifolia H. f. & B. The karam festivals will be described later on.

31 Mukherjea O. Y-4, 5 (ca. 1938-1939) 1962
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Gipitic'

224 634 628 When the hunt is finished, all the Santals assembled repair to the Gipitic', the place fixed for spending the night after the excursion is over. The Parganas sit together and decide disputes regarding the ownership of hunted games which are heaped under the shades of trees occupied by the villagers of particular localities.

Let us take up a concrete case to illustrate the rules regarding the decision of such claims. Suppose an animal was first shot by X of a village A. Thereafter, it was again shot at by the villagers of B and again by C. The judges, in such a case, would award the *mandal* (the hind part of an animal) of the right leg together with the head of the animal, the liver and lungs (*imbòrò*) to X. It is customary for the man thus allowed his first share to offer the *imbòrò* (liver and lungs) to the Chief presiding deity, Maraṅ Buru, and Haprạmko and share the meal with the members of his clan. Should B, who had the second shot, belong to village A, he will not get any special share. But if the fact be otherwise, he will get five ribs of the right front side. Similarly, C will not be allowed a share should he be an inhabitant of A but will receive the meat measuring three fingers of the entire neck of the hunted animal. The Parganas, who decide these cases have a special knack of identifying the man by whose arrow the animal was

3t Mukherjea O. Y-4,5 (ca. 1933-1939) 1952
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shot. They also take evidence as regards the first, second and third shots.

The rest of the meat is taken by the villagers of the man who had the first shot and shared among themselves. It is worthy of note that even the [231] hunting dogs employed in the chase receive their shares equally with men. Generally, the meat that goes to X's share is carried by his villagers home. The head of the game shot is divided into two parts, the first going to X, the other to the villagers of X. The Headman of X's village gets the left hind leg (*donde*). This is also conveyed home by the villagers, who, in return, receive a pot of rice-beer, twelve seers of rice, five pieces of turmeric and some salt. It is customary for the men thus presented to cook a hotch-poteh with the head of the hunted animal previously received for a common meal.

In case an animal like a *Gayal* or *Sambar* (a species of deer like an elk) is hunted by, say ten or twelve men, custom lays it down that the first five hunters will only receive their shares.

It should be noted that if X's wife is pregnant, [843] he will not get the head of the animal and it will go to the villagers to be shared by them. The [793] *Dihri* gets a share of meat per each mouza of men who hunted the animals.

Another important feature deserves mention. It 224
may be that in a *Deshua Sendra* there may be any 782

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that reason. Gradual deforestation and the absence of any effective protection for wild animals account for the present scarcity. Leopards, once present in great numbers, are now rare, though black bears are still relatively common. Some of the smaller kinds of Indian deer are found. It is many years since a tiger was killed in the Bankura district. Wild pigs are abundant, and so is the jungle hare, and there are many species of bird whose flesh is prized by the Santal. Every male of the tribe is an expert with the bow and arrow, and he is trained in its use from early childhood. The village parties hold together; they carry their own rations of rice and dried *matkom* cake for the night meal, and they are accompanied by their sleek and well-fed dogs. The men are dressed in loin-cloths, but they wear turbans roughly wrapped round their heads for protection against the heat of the sun. Some of the younger boys carry drums instead of weapons. The drums are used to swell the noise in the forest as the animals are driven closer towards the centre and to signal a kill, but they are also needed for the dancing that will follow. The flesh of the animals is distributed according to a regular code, though the rules are passing from use and now it is usual for the stronger of two parties to take the flesh of a kill when it is in dispute. The man who draws first blood receives the *madol*, consisting of one hind-leg, a part of which he must give to the headman of his village. If the man who first touches the animal belongs to a different village, he receives a shoulder; if it has been slain by yet another person than the one who drew first blood, the slayer receives five ribs, one fore-leg and the liver. The *dihri* receives the neck, and the remainder of the flesh goes to the co-villagers of the man who wounded the animal and not of the man who killed it. When the meat is distributed among the villagers, those who carry drums receive a double portion, and some of the meat is given to the dogs.

By evening several hundred men gather in the place where they are to spend the night. Camp fires are lit near some watercourse, and the moon rises slowly over the graceful palms that fringe the water and the belt of *sarjom* trees beyond. For some it is a night of hard work, for others it is a night of revelry. The elders from all the villages are gathered together for this one night during the year and form the supreme council of the tribe. The disputes which have baffled their several efforts in the course of the year are brought forward. Complaints involving members of more than one village are voiced and range

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over a wide field, involving inheritance, marriages and instances of indiscipline. Members are allowed to appeal against decisions made in village councils. Punishments inflicted range from outcasting to fines, and crude punishments are sometimes exacted on the spot, as in a case of a youth who had transgressed the rules of behaviour towards a woman relative with whom he was not in a joking relationship. He was compelled to drag his nose along a line of urine provided by the village headman whose authority had been flouted. The hearing of cases continues till the small hours of the morning and the discussions appear interminable, with accusation and counter-accusation, the calling of witnesses and references to tribal law and custom. It is, however, one of the great educating and cementing institutions in the life of the tribe. It is known to them by the name of "high court", a name that has been naturalized in most Indian languages. It is also called the *sendra dupup'*, the hunt sitting, and the *lo bir dupup'*, the burnt forest sitting, the latter name being due to the fact that the hunt takes place when the undergrowth in the forest has been burnt to help the fertilizing of the soil.

Meanwhile, when the evening meal is over the young men gather in another part of the clearing and spend the night in revelry. There is much strong liquor in evidence. In some cases the place of meeting has become the site of a government liquor shop. The dances, of a class known as *doiger*, are men's dances, and the songs, known as *bir*, or forest songs, are men's songs. They are frankly coarse and deal largely with the physical aspects of love, courtship and lust. Many of the songs that are sung on this night are never sung by the Santals in any mixed company, or, indeed, at any other time, a fact that indicates among them a standard of delicacy in sexual behaviour which certain modern schools of thought appear at times to deny to primitive people.

Towards morning some of the folk, young and old, rest for an hour or two of much-needed sleep, but when the sun has risen they take some breakfast and begin to disperse. They make their way to their own villages, hunting as they go; but on this second day the proceedings are apt to be unexciting, for they do not find much to kill. By late afternoon the men are home again with their spoils, and when these have been divided they work off their fatigue in sleep.

The supposed monotony of the struggle for a livelihood is broken by so many devices of nature and of man that it is